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ABSTRACT

The Berkeley campus of the University of California has initiated the Educational Opportunity Plan (EOP) to recruit disadvantaged students and provide financial support, tutoring, and counseling. The purpose of the program is to assist and motivate California high school students who are members of culturally disadvantaged groups and who have demonstrated intellectual promise. Under the 1960 California master plan for public higher education, some four percent of entering and transfering students are admissible by special provision, and it is this "four percent rule" that is used for recruitment of EOP students. Risk applicants must submit three to five letters of recommendation from teachers and counselors. Admissions standards are, however, flexible enough to accommodate those who are academically deficient but promising. Examination of the profiles of former EOP students indicates that EOP serves a cross-section of the disadvantaged. Major sources of financial aid for EOP students are federal grants and loans, private gifts, University registration fees, and special Regents' appropriations. The Berkeley EOP has been successful as evidenced by an independent evaluation by the Southern Educational Foundation. (RJ)

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Berkeley's Educational Opportunity Program

The salience of higher education to socio-economic success points to the urgency of accommodating increasing numbers of disadvantaged youths in higher education. Education for the disadvantaged, who are disproportionately minority group members, moves the society closer to a fully rational use of human resources and provides legitimate channels to success. Educating the disadvantaged requires, however, special programs. Due to deficiencies in his educational experience, the disadvantaged student needs an intensive program of tutorial and financial aid to succeed in college. He requires a broader program of educational guidance.

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The Berkeley campus of the University of California has responded to the challenge of the minority and low-income student in higher education. It has initiated the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) to recruit the disadvantaged and provide financial support, tutoring, and counseling. The Regents established Projects for Educational Opportunity to provide awards to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The purpose of the program is to " . . . assist and motivate California high school students who are members of culturally disadvantaged groups and who have demonstrated intellectual

promise . . ." The Regents match campus funds on a five-to-one basis.

Under the 1960 California master plan for public higher education, the University is required to select its students from among the top 12½ per cent of the state's high school graduates. Some four per cent of entering and transferring students are admissible by special provision. It is the "four per cent rule" that is used to recruit promising low-income and minority students who do not meet the formal requirements for admission. Today, more than 900 students are enrolled in the Educational Opportunity Program at Berkeley.

Recruitment

The risk applicant must submit three to five letters of recommendation from teachers and counselors and write a biographical statement, including his plans for the future. The EOP admissions committee reviews the applicant's pattern of grades and sometimes requests a personal interview if supplementary information is desirable. A special committee of the EOP director, the Admissions Officer, and the chairman of the Faculty Committee on Admissions reviews each application. Each committee member votes for or against admission.

The admissions standards are flexible enough to accommodate those who are academically deficient but promising. High school performance is not the only indicator of a student's

college potential. The exclusive use of such a measure is an efficient means of screening out the minority group and low-income student. The high, positive correlation between economic standing and academic achievement has been well established. The American Council on Education's 1959 Conference on the Disadvantaged concluded, not surprisingly, that the financially able student has greater opportunity to prepare for college than the minority group student who is burdened by disrupted family life and an inferior, inner-city education.

A survey of the 75 high schools in the San Francisco Bay Area demonstrates that virtually no minority students prepare for college. In one of the state's highest achieving high schools, for example, only 89 of 1,300 Negroes in the tenth to twelfth grades enrolled in college preparatory courses and had a C average or better. There were only 12 Negroes from that high school at Berkeley, the largest contingent from any one school.

Most minority, college preparatory students are girls, but few enter college. Of the small number of minority boys who prepare for college, only a few will go on to college. The attrition rate for both groups during college is quite high. Lack of academic preparation and financial resources force many minority students out. The fact is that with the exception of Negroes at predominantly Negro colleges, few minority group persons are graduating from college.

The Universitywide Office of Relations with Schools operates a major program to recruit disadvantaged students. Its representatives visit some 120 high schools with sizable minority enrollments annually in an effort to interest these students to undertake college preparatory programs. A similar program is carried out in the Junior Colleges. The Office also works in 60 junior high schools with 30 per cent or more minority population to promote enrollment in college preparatory courses. In addition, communication is maintained with county Departments of Social Welfare, the California State Employment Service, and local poverty programs such as the East Bay Skills Center and the San Francisco Mission District Poverty Office.

Regularly admitted Berkeley students are very much involved in the effort to aid the disadvantaged. They are particularly involved in the College Commitment Program, funded by the Rosenberg Foundation and sponsored by the Berkeley campus in coordination with other four-year institutions in the San Francisco Bay Area. Under this program University students are placed in local high schools as assistant counselors to work with minority and low-income youth. They provide pre-college counseling, tutoring during and after school, and financial aid information. They also confer with students' families, outlining the possibilities and realities of a college career. Six schools have been involved in the College Commitment Program to date. It is presently being expanded to include 25 high schools. It will eventually serve all Bay Area high schools.

Graduate students have recently been included in the Educational Opportunity Program. In 1967, 20 students were in the program; the 1968 figure was 75. In developing the Educational Opportunity Program for graduate students, the University has endeavored to prepare disadvantaged persons for professional work, especially teaching, law, medicine, and dentistry. The Berkeley EOP has also begun to recruit graduate students from southern Negro colleges. Visits are made to the Negro colleges and students there are encouraged to participate in a junior year program at the University as well as graduate study. The assumption is that students who spend a junior year at Berkeley will seriously consider graduate work at the University. A number of students from Tuskegee Institute in Montgomery, Alabama, who have completed a two-year pre-forestry course, attend a Berkeley summer camp and subsequently complete their studies in forestry at Berkeley. Educational Opportunity funds and a grant from the National Science Foundation pay the expenses of students recruited from Negro colleges.

A number of University departments recruit and aid minority and low-income students. For example, a special committee in the Berkeley School of Social Welfare has recruited Negro and Spanish surname students since 1964. It recently received a $258,000 Carnegie Corporation grant to further increase the department's minority enrollment. The Department of Mathematics has a program to provide financial and academic assistance for

students who are inadequately prepared in mathematics. The Department of Education seeks minority students who wish to train as teaching professionals. Eight other departments are also involved in aiding the disadvantaged.

Profiles of Recruited Students

The Educational Opportunity Program serves a cross-section of the disadvantaged. A sketch of a few former EOP students will indicate this diversity. A Negro woman with a school-age child entered the program as a Junior College transfer. She maintained a B average at the University. Another mother enrolled at the University, later followed by her daughter. A 60-year-old Negro woman was admitted. Two men over 35 enrolled. A Negro man matriculated at Berkeley only a few weeks after his release from San Quentin Prison as a two-time offender. Two of his writings were recently accepted for publication. He told the EOP director that he finally felt that he had a purpose in life and an opportunity to achieve it. (Four other men from San Quentin subsequently applied to the University.) A 27-year-old American Indian, proficient in English, French, and Russian, came to the University without funds. He achieved a B+ average. A Mexican-American 20 years old entered the University following Navy service. Although not regularly admissible, and despite a language problem and unfamiliarity with urban life (he came from a rural area), this man achieved

at a level above the University average.

Financial Aid

The minority and low-income student, burdened by an inferior preparedness, needs adequate financial aid to allow him to devote himself fully to his studies. He cannot succeed in college if he must work fifteen or more hours a week. Finances must be provided.

The major sources of finance for disadvantaged students at Berkeley are federal grants and loans, some private gifts, University registration fees, and special Regents' appropriations. The federal programs providing resources are Work-Study, Educational Opportunity Grants, and National Defense Education Act loans. These programs supply the bulk of funds for Berkeley's EOP students. The Educational Opportunity Grant program is being used to benefit many students who come from poverty circumstances as defined by the federal criterion. Educational Opportunity Grants aid entering freshmen of exceptional financial need, who for lack of financial means would otherwise be unable to enter or remain in college. The Work-Study program provides part-time employment for college students who need work to stay in college, with preference going to students from low-income families. Employment is limited to either on- or off-campus public or nonprofit private organizations. Even application fees may be waived when necessary. Educational

Opportunity Program freshmen are offered full-time jobs in the summer so they need not work during the school year. The goal is financial independence for the EOP student.

Great promise for overcoming financial barriers for disadvantaged students inheres in the stipulations of the federal Educational Opportunity Grant program. The program specifies that colleges are eligible for Educational Opportunity Grant funds only if they establish a vigorous recruiting program to identify and enroll disadvantaged students. However, many colleges without such programs receive EOG money and use it to match scholarship funds. Scholarships generally do not benefit minority group youth. In fact, more scholarship money goes to youth from families in the upper 15 per cent financial bracket than to those in the bottom 40 per cent. Stricter enforcement of the specifications of federal programs would serve to allocate increased financial resources to disadvantaged students.

A Student Needs Subcommittee has recommended to the Centennial Fund Priorities Committee that fund raising for financially disadvantaged students be given the highest priority. A good program for both undergraduate and graduate students would require a minimum of five million dollars per year. A fund of $800,000 in University resources is currently available, matching two million dollars of federal and extra-mural funds.

Evaluation

The Berkeley Educational Opportunity Program has been successful. One independent evaluation of Berkeley's Educational Opportunity Program by the Southern Education Foundation characterizes the University of California as "The State University that appears to be 'getting with it' more than any other . . ." in recruiting and admitting minority and low-income youth who show promise but do not fully meet admission requirements. Students in the program have done acceptable college work. Almost 70 per cent of them are in good academic standing with C-or-better grades. The remaining 30 per cent are on academic probation with below-C grades. Significantly, the 60 per cent of EOP students who were specially admitted to the University have achieved as well as the others who were regularly admitted. The level of persistence has also been noteworthy. Of the 449 EOP freshmen admitted in 1967-68, nearly 89 per cent returned for the fall quarter, 1968, and of the 245 transfer students admitted the same year, 91 per cent returned. The low attrition rate and the adequate academic performance constitute a very encouraging sign of success.

A longitudinal analysis of the student population indicates that the representation of low-income groups at the University is increasing. Just over 7 per cent of those eligible to enroll in the University in the fall of 1967 came from families with an

annual income of $6,000 or less. The corresponding figure for the fall of 1968 was 12 per cent. Progress is definitely being made in increasing the enrollment of low-income students.

There are unfortunately some deficiencies and dysfunctions in the Berkeley Educational Opportunity Program. Academic tutoring for minority students is a major problem. A minimum of one part-time advisor is desirable for every ten students. Applying this formula, a program of academic assistance for minority students presently enrolled would cost at least $250,000. Yet funds are not available. Another problem is government retrenchment on the Work-Study Program. Only 60 per cent of the requested funds were allocated this year. The 803 positions originally filled in fall, 1968 were cut to 594 for eleven rather than twelve weeks for the winter and spring quarters. The 86 non-campus community agencies and 130 campus employers involved in the program had their allotments reduced for winter and spring. An additional 300 requests are on file which cannot be filled.

A very real threat to the higher education of the disadvantaged is the University of California's adoption of a 6-hour entrance examination for all high school applicants. These tests, shown to be culturally biased, complicate the process of reaching minority and low-income persons. The so-called "culturally deprived" do very poorly on them.

The California political climate also threatens Berkeley's program for the disadvantaged. There is great political opposition to admitting more minority students who do not meet

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admission standards. A recent poll showed only 13 per cent of Californians approved of special admissions for blacks. University of California President Charles J. Hitch has stated that "We must help make clear that special admission of black students is not leading to a lowering of our instructional standards. . . In fact, the relatively good performance of many specially-admitted students indicates that our admission standards perhaps need not be lowered so much as revised to be better predictors of college success." Hopefully, this argument can be carried effectively to the people and the state government.